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Bard

Sun new the day breeze keeps
morning moving. Trucks.
The unspeakable word.

Admirations: we are in love
with what passes. Hence
love cars and tracks and Barnard girls

runwaying up Broadway
in the last breeze of summer
mitt shaped leaves and here

a hundred miles away to be
back home carrying city weather
phone messages from the gods

incomprehensible intelligences
leave words in my machine
all these good intentions

must be Hell that called
giving laws and commentaries
what the voice on the mountain meant

by my neighbor's wife
I have no neighbor
she isn't married.

13 October 2001

Beyond the grasp of yachts
parachutes and other suicides
only words, those knives, can reach.
But there is nothing you can teach a mountain.
And god help us if they should wake.
Right now they're safe across the river
beyond these hesitations of the chipmunk
the taste he seems to be licking from his paws.
Does it matter which one of us is talking?
Blue as midnight I am you. And you
red as jasper are certainly my flesh.
A philosopher is a man who makes
a wall to stand against, afraid to cross
the room and touch your hand.
Let licit language heal these distances.
Come back and be my city.

13 October 2001

Come back and be my city, city.

Let there be three
towers next time
each higher than
all the others
the crow
told me five minutes
back be still

13 October 2001

DESERTED

Now that the empty house
eats up the woman, the woman
leaves now, she drives
away from a man who was never there

was just an an elm tree a survivor
blond with age waiting
for nobody anymore it
all is here at last.

14 October 2001

taste of bread
early
all that's left
of religion

enough
this hour
to know
the kindness

hidden inside
the open door
the green spilled
secret

14 October 2001

Latin once taught Catholics how to listen *through* language. Now that door is shut.

Latin, because it was nobody's language, could be everybody's. Could be catholic.

It's so hard to listen through your *own* language — you keep hearing only yourself.

I too wanted the vernacular liturgy, impressed by the beauty of the Book of Common Prayer. But that was just thinking, or sometimes even feeling. But it wasn't hearing.

When the Church persuaded itself that the vernacular would bring people to church, or back to church, they were just thinking. They fell into the quantitative heresy: reckoning the success of religion by the number of converts or congregants. By doing so they forgot the mystery of the redemption: one can do the work of all. Christ's one death saved all humankind.

The success of a religion is not its census figures but its truth.

But the voice is always speaking. Buddhavacana. The task is to learn listening. Learning from the old lineage of those who knew how to hear.

14 October 2001

All my chances
renew in you.
Angel. Watching
over.

Stare a sound in the eyes

the motor passes.

We write, as we speak, in syllables

I added commas
to shape the sound

hands of the breath

just the feeling of the morning on skin

from last night's rain bright sun sucks
mist up through trees

just the feeling of
the skin
answering the long interrogations of desire

were you drunk again last night
was it wine or was it who

strange rubaiyat in an empty place

a crop of mushrooms on the lawn
phallus impudicus
telling you something

where is the place for us to hide the sea?

Trellis on which the heart is trained

potter's wheel
spins frantic
inside the bony mansion
where the heart
convulses between its lungs

one man and one woman in four rooms at once

I worked all night long in dream
now bring it and press it in your hands
something tender and wild with feeling

sunwise a new sin.

15 October 2001

Take this chisel from my pocket
where I have it stored
with apes and offspring
swan tracks and your cave

I carry a mountain in me for you
and a stick a stone a bowl of milk
and this chisel to comment on the wall

midnight is a moving point between the lights
so it's graveyard shift in this café
I write your skin in spilled coffee
I write in salt

16 October 2001

grant at least a measure
against going
a plant in terra cotta
dry against winter

but will it live again
ever when we break the measure
'breaking Time's head'
'in some age or another

if not in this?'
if not in this where will we carry
these profligate red leaves

that strike me now
with palpable weight
back of my head
from what I suppose

my own trees
exciting what I think
are my own ideas

but I have nothing, we
have nothing but
our disobedience
to a law we never heard.

17 October 2001

To be without a certain voice
and still be listening

It comes into the world by hearing
how strange to fail that physics

Listening and nothing heard
as if Nature all at once
fell in love with a vacuum.

18 October 2001

the fence the leaves the light
gamboges after rain a fresh
wash of cold the amber
happens

a kind of muscled light
writhing through the trees.

18 October 2001

Zither music

Albany Vienna old
red brick factories of river Troy

the pallid countenance of sky
refuses nothing

Energy animal all 'I' am.

18 October 2001, Albany

KINE

Be sure. The cows on the slope
shamble into sunrise.

The corn. The house an
ironic comment on itself

the way a house would be
if no one had to live in it.

The way the sun never goes home into itself
the way the trucks are hurrying
up the road from Tonganoxie to somewhere else
elm trees yellow after all this fall
a cough of mist through the woods over there

I want to know the thing in all detail
and all I really get to know is attitude,

I only know one end of the only road

like mandarins on the emperor's business
in endless prairies a thousand li from home
alone with morning sunshine
and shy in such company.

19 October 2001
Kansas

KANSAS NOTATIONS

And what is the bird that hits the window is a leaf,
What then? Owl fluff.

One's life is oral performance.

In dream alone do I feel the permission to experience *time*
without the frightened urgency that drives my waking life, street, road, talk,
thought.

“even earthquakes eventually equilibrate” — Ed Casey

I wish I could dream
right in the middle of the day

flash from this shared space
to that one

shared with other and maybe folk,

the maybe-folk of dream.

When dreaming, imagine myself awake.
When awake, imagine myself adream.

This pen I bought in Vienna
I write with in Kansas

Everything comes from somewhere else
But love is always here

Love, shape, the thing we *make*
I mean the thing we mean.

19/20 October 2001
Lawrence

PRAIRIE

The dogs all night
celebrate our arrival
dyslexic stars
scurry through corn fields

I think of Samuel Palmer I think of Blake
and I too am poor
a little and rich a lot

I think of the beautiful women I knew
I think of architect's houses
so good to look at hard to live

I think of all I have lost
and a hawk swoops off with a prairie dog
there, just past the golden elm.

19 October 2001
Kansas

IN A STRANGE COUNTRY

I don't know the trees the grass, the clouds
themselves are different
from the ones I keep in the bank
of memoria, being mindful
of what's in mind

like a shopping list pinned on the door
of the cupboard where the shopped for goods are stored

the thing is the least of our worries
and the name is all,
rolling over in the big bed and saying
I love you and how gently you accept
such an extraordinary thing to do or say.

19 October 2001
Kansas

unspeak, as if a quiet
knew how to hear

piano disaster Liszt
late in life a slow
any hands could say it

if they knew
the music
waits inside the chest

to analyze desperate vantages of bone

fingerings of master pianists
I love you do it this way
wild capacities of need
vocabulary of the infinitely small

20 October 2001
Kansas

MIDNIGHT IN KANSAS

paseo of slow low loud cars down Massachusetts Street
pickups gleaming in their Friday wax
eighteen inch woofers growling out the back

I am town after all, a sad man
who failed to please the only one he cared.

20 October 2001
Lawrence

SPOON

They had not left a spoon in the room so he went into the hall and asked the chambermaid for a spoon. A small blond girl, she did not speak. She looked around the big trolley she wheels up the hall, and handed him a pillow. He took the pillow, and said A spoon, though. She looked around. She led him to a door she unlocked. Inside, a big dark space like the housewares section of a big department store closed for the night. She kept looking around as if she had no idea where anything was, or where she was. She pointed to the pillow in his hands. Spoon? he asked again. She looked around. He began to wonder at last if the pillow was a sign, and she meant them to go to bed together. Over there in the dark aisle along the wall maybe. A sign easy to read, but it had taken him a long time to read it. she looked at the door they'd come in by, and went to close it, as if for their privacy. He looked for a spoon. Soon he spotted an urn of white plastic spoons and took a few. He knew he should avoid metal spoons since he would be flying soon and had to go through security, and anything metal was a weapon, wasn't it. He felt the nice plastic spoons in his hand and squeezed the pillow and looked at the girl and thought.

21 October 2001
Lawrence [dream, exact]

GEOTHEOLOGY

A left handed day again, imöx. The last one was October 1, and before that the strange disaster they call 9/11, which was Six Imöx — madness at the center.

Here is the center. The fearful geodetic landmark, the Middle. Buddha Family at the center of the continental mandala. Buddha Family = Ignorance.

Ignorance is unquestioning belief in the reality of the self, one's 'own' self.

Lawrence, Kansas. The men are better looking than the women. In fact I have not seen a single pretty woman here. Why? Here is why:

Beauty is always half-way to the other.

The truly ignorant can never be beautiful, since ignorance calmly accepts itself as the measure, as the meaning.

21 October 2001

Only when it calls
does it make sense to speak

have I answered when I heard its voice

have I presumed to speak before being asked
spoken before being called on, called out,
to respond

to respond

to marry with a word

have I gotten married without responding
have I touched the flesh of the listener uninvited

such language makes a myth of me

a serious translator waiting by the side of the road

They die and I talk
a day will come
when I do too. Or still.

Bright patterned garments to arouse the corporeal soul.

At least it let me say that.

21 October 2001
Kansas

He found her face below the cabin. Brushing it clear, clean, with his fingertips, gently as someone brushing on makeup, he removed the dirt and leafmold. It was she. This is her true face. Then who was the other, the one in the cabin, the one he was leaving? And so small, this original face.

21 October 2001
Lawrence